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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A network device having a plurality of ports including address resolution logic (ARL), a first switch, a second switch, and a CPU. The first and second switches include groups of ports which are a subset of the plurality of ports and are numbered by different numbering schemes, rate control logic for performing rate control functions related to switching data packets between the network ports, and local communications channels for transmitting messages between the groups of ports and the rate control logic. The first switch is configured to generate a rate control message and relay the rate control message to the second switch, and the second switch is configured to generate a second rate control message based on the first rate control message, where the second rate control message is different than the first message.